

CONNECTICUT ALLIANCE TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Support. Advocate. Prevent.

March 1, 2022

Testimony by Lucy Nolan, Director of Policy and Public Relations
Before the Committee on Housing

SB 168 An Act Establishing a Right to Housing

SB 200 An Act Concerning Summary Process Records

Good day, Senator Lopes, Representative Phipps, Senator Cicarella, Representative Polletta and members of the Housing Committee. My name is Lucy Nolan. I am the Director of Policy and Public Relations at the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence, the statewide coalition of Connecticut's nine community-based sexual assault crisis services centers. Our mission is to create communities free of sexual violence and to provide culturally affirming trauma-informed advocacy and prevention centered on the voices of survivors.

I am here today in support of two bills Raised Bill 168 An Act Establishing a Right to Housing and Raised Bill 200 An Act Concerning Summary Process Records.

These bills are critical to survivors of sexual violence. Survivors of sexual violence have complex housing needs. Experiencing violence can jeopardize a person's housing, and homelessness and housing insecurity can increase the risk of more violence. Intimate partner violence, landlords or neighbors who sexually harass or assault tenants create a need to find new housing. Of women who experienced sexual assault, 11% reported it happened at home¹ yet, over 50% of women who needed housing services did not receive them². The trauma related to sexual violence is often not recognized in shelters leading to more exploitation for survivors. It is critical that victims and survivors of sexual violence have safe places to live.

SB 168 An Act Establishing a Right to Housing (support)

Many survivors of sexual violence have complex housing needs. The violence they experienced can jeopardize their housing, increase their risk of homelessness or housing insecurity, and increase the risk that they will experience additional violence. The Alliance supports the establishment of a right to housing committee and asks that there be both a domestic violence and a sexual violence

¹ Stop Street Harassment. (2018). The facts behind the #metoo movement: A national study on sexual harassment and assault. Stop Street Harassment. <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Full-Report-2018-National-Study-on-Sexual-Harassment-and-Assault.pdf>,

²D'Iverno, A. S., Smith, S. G., Zhang, X., & Chen, J. (2019). The impact of intimate partner violence: A 2015 NISVS research-in-brief. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence Member Centers



representative with knowledge of the unique housing insecurity experiences of both survivors of sexual violence and domestic violence appointed to the committee, not one or the other as the bill currently reads. Survivors of sexual violence and domestic violence have distinct and separate experiences of violence and trauma and its effects on their lives.

Sexual violence affects a survivor's ability to find and have safe housing options. Survivors of sexual violence may leave home at an early age running away from child sexual abuse from a person close to them such as a parent, uncle, neighbor or close family friend. Eighty percent of sexual violence is perpetrated by someone known to the victim. As a runaway they may find themselves homeless and victimized again while on the street. The long term effects from the sexual violence show up in a variety of ways that affect housing opportunities, such as substance abuse, anger issues, arrests for property and/or violent crimes for some.

We urge the committee to add a separate and distinct representative of sexual violence to the committee in addition to a representative of domestic violence in Section 2 (b) (4).

SB 200 An Act Concerning Summary Process Records

The Alliance supports legislation that supports those in need of housing. As it currently stands, anyone who has an eviction filed against them for any reason has an eviction record. These records are taken by data collection companies and put into databases, or exist for years on the State Judicial website. Currently, landlords can deny renters' applications solely because the tenant had a previous eviction filed against them, regardless of the outcome of the eviction case or whether it had any merit, or even if the record identifies the wrong individual on the record. This bill will ensure an eviction are removed from the Judicial Branch website within thirty days of a summary judgment process due to the withdrawal of the case, a judgment of dismissal or nonsuit on any grounds, or a judgement in favor of the defendant. Additionally, companies that purchase the records for consumer reporting or other uses must remove the information upon notice that it is removed from the Judicial website.

Our member centers see survivors of sexual violence and domestic violence who were evicted due to the bad behavior of those who have abused them and who have landlords refuse to rent to them regardless of their need or fault. This bill will have a significant impact on women, especially women of color who, historically, are more likely to be denied housing due to the current summary process record access.

Our clients experience eviction because they lived with someone who stopped paying rent out of spite; they lost income when abuser was removed from the home; they lost jobs as a direct result of abuse or stalking; or they were not allowed to work or rent in their own names in the past so the only thing on

their rental history is the hard time they had immediately after exiting abuse, or a landlord who retaliated against the tenant because they did not respond positively to sexual advances. They deserve and need relief to be able to work with their families, hold their jobs, and be safe. This bill will do so.

Thank you.

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